



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

VOLUME XX

NOVEMBER 1914

NUMBER 3

---

## CHICAGO HOUSING CONDITIONS, IX: THE LITHUANIANS IN THE FOURTH WARD<sup>1</sup>

---

ELIZABETH HUGHES  
Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy

---

Until its admission as part of Chicago in 1863 the prairie village of Hamburg occupied that territory just east of the fork of the South Branch of the Chicago River which is now a part of the Fourth Ward. Hamburg was made up of German and Irish immigrants, new arrivals on American shores, together with earlier comers driven out of the Tenth Ward by the influx of Poles. Even after 1863 much of pioneer life persisted in the settlement. More than one old house has as its nucleus a tiny one-room shack moved by a struggling team of horses down the unpaved road that is now Halsted Street. There are still living in these houses old settlers who were formerly dependent upon the neighborhood well for their sole water supply, and who had to journey a considerable distance to the one general store to make purchases. These same people had, in 1871, an uninterrupted view from their doorsteps off over low, flat land to the burning city of Chicago.

<sup>1</sup> This article is the ninth in a series of studies of housing conditions in Chicago based upon a house-to-house canvass of selected districts by the students in the Department of Social Investigation of the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. The students of the department, with the approval of the commissioner of health, Dr. George B. Young, and under the supervision of the chief sanitary inspector, Charles B. Ball, during the year 1913-14 made the canvass and shared in the work of tabulation. The material was organized by Elizabeth Hughes, assisted by Helen M. Dart and Grace Peloubet Norton. Photographs are by H. B. Humphrey.

The growth from village to city has been a slow and natural one, as is shown by the character of the housing of the neighborhood. About thirty years ago a prosperous firm of contractors built a uniform row of small brick cottages on Lime Street, but everywhere else a wide variety in age, architecture, and type of building is found. There are small frame cottages, originally workingmen's homes, that are still occupied by one family. There are other old dwellings that have been made over into apartment houses. Scattered throughout are modern brick tenements, indicative of the last step in the transition from a thinly to a thickly



ROW OF COTTAGES ON LIME STREET

In many of these houses, three families are now living

populated section. On some streets are rows of tall, narrow buildings, with steep gables and marked ornamentation in red and yellow brick, such as might be found in a European city. There are still numerous vacant lots, tin-can and rubbish covered, which there is reason to believe will speedily be built upon, for this district, lying as it does within walking distance of the lumber yards and river and flanked on both north and south by extensive factories, is likely to become the home of an increasingly large number of workers.

Because of its character as a representative foreign community where conditions are as nearly normal as in any part of the city, this district in the Fourth Ward was chosen for an intensive study of housing conditions. The house-to-house canvass, which covered

the ten blocks between Thirty-second Street and Thirty-fourth Place, South Halsted and South Morgan streets, demonstrated that just as at an earlier date the Irish and Germans had been displaced by the Poles, so now the Poles are being displaced by a still more recent group of immigrants. At present, Lithuanians comprise 68 per cent of the total population of the district canvassed; the Poles only 16 per cent; while there remains but a scattering of Irish and Germans. The Poles are now found almost entirely in the blocks lying toward the river, while in four of the eastern blocks over 75 per cent of the population was found to be Lithuanian. A huge Lithuanian church with its parochial school dominates the whole neighborhood.

The occupation of this district by the Lithuanians is, of course, recent, since these people belong to the "newer immigration." Only within the last ten or fifteen years have they in large numbers left their home in Western Russia, driven in part by economic causes, in part by desire to avoid compulsory service in the army of a country whose government they regard as oppressive. Thrifty and frugal, intelligent and hardy, they, with their industry and reverence for law, make most desirable immigrants to this country.

Once here they enter into many industries. The heads of households in the ten blocks canvassed show a wide variety of occupations. Employees in the stockyards are most numerous; then follow iron and steel workers, street and railway employees, carpenters, bricklayers, contractors, janitors, tailors, and a relatively large number of business men. It is, therefore, a region dominated by no one industry, such as that of the steel mills of South Chicago, but a neighborhood which shows unusually well the operation of natural tendencies, the possibilities of wise tenement-house regulation, and the necessity of adequate tenement-law enforcement.

Table I shows the composition of the present population. Twenty-eight per cent of the people are adult lodgers, a larger proportion of lodgers than was found in any other foreign district. The region "back of the yards" and the Polish district of South Chicago show a slightly lower percentage, while in the Slovak district the proportion is less than half as great. Where lodgers are

numerous, children are few, and therefore the proportion of children is small. Overcrowding and bad moral conditions incident to the lodger evil will be discussed later.

TABLE I  
POPULATION OF TEN BLOCKS

	Number	Percentage
Adults in family.....	2,566	45
Children under twelve.....	1,503	27
Adult lodgers.....	1,555	28
Total.....	5,624	100

In the light of the probable future increase in population it is interesting to note from Table II that the present density per

TABLE II  
DENSITY OF POPULATION

Block Number	Area in Acres*	Population	Density per Acre
1.....	2.39	411	172
2.....	4.16	554	134
3.....	3.15	694	220
4.....	2.38†	465	196
5.....	2.84‡	603	212
6.....	3.86	602	156
7.....	3.86	568	147
8.....	3.86	781	203
9.....	3.86	546	142
10.....	3.86	400	104
Totals and average density	34.22	5,624	164

\* Area in acres means net area.

† 1.17 acres were deducted for church and school.

‡ 1.01 acres were deducted for a public-school building.

acre does not exceed 220 for any one of the ten blocks, and averages but 164, a number far below that of the Italian, Polish, or Slovak districts. In this connection it should be remembered that this lesser density is to a large extent accounted for by the fact, already mentioned, that many of the lots are still vacant. Density of population, moreover, means little unless taken in connection with lot crowding. Table III makes clear that fifteen lots, seven of

which were interior lots, were more than 90 per cent covered. In one case the only space on two adjoining premises not actually occupied by the houses was a covered stairway and hall  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide. Another house, in which eight children were living, had no vacant space adjoining save a long 3-foot passage more than half roofed over. On the corner of one block was a three-story house occupying over 90 per cent of the lot. Here lived seven families, with a total of thirteen children under twelve years of age. The only open space for another house, containing four families, was a court 3 feet wide by 14 feet long. In spite of many such instances, however, it is evident that so far as lot overcrowding is concerned

TABLE III  
NUMBER OF LOTS COVERED A SPECIFIED PERCENTAGE

Percentage of Lot Covered	Number of Lots	Percentage of Total Number
Less than 50 . . . . .	183	50
50 and less than 60 . . . . .	49	14
60 and less than 70 . . . . .	54	15
70 and less than 80 . . . . .	43	12
80 and less than 90 . . . . .	20	5
90 and less than 100 . . . . .	10	3
100 . . . . .	5	1
Total . . . . .	364	100

better conditions exist here than in other parts of the city previously investigated. For example, the Lower North Side Italian district had only one-seventh of the lots less than half covered and only half of them less than four-fifths, while in this district 50 per cent of the lots were less than half covered and 90 per cent less than four-fifths.

Nevertheless, the important question is whether the lot spaces are planned so as to give the greatest possible amount of light and air. With the law permitting the covering of 75 per cent of the lot for interior and 85 per cent for corner lots,<sup>1</sup> it is evident that if all the rooms of the house are to be habitable the planning of the lot calls for as much care and ingenuity as the planning of the house

<sup>1</sup> Revised Building Ordinances of the City of Chicago, sec. 440.

itself. Many instances were found of houses too close to the lot-line where the percentage of uncovered space was high enough. Courts were too narrow and wrongly placed. Such conditions call for a housing law that shall be adequate in this particular and shall be thoroughly enforced. That enforcement especially needs emphasis is evident from the fact that in nine cases houses built since the tenement-house law of 1902 covered more than the legal percentage of the lot.

The varied character of the buildings in this district has already been mentioned. The one- or two-story frame cottage, the earliest erected, yet remains the prevalent type of house. Forty-four per cent of all the houses were but one story high; an additional 42 per cent but two stories. But though 44 per cent of all the buildings were one-story frame cottages, 73 per cent contain more than one apartment. Here, therefore, as elsewhere in Chicago, the old dwelling intended for sheltering but one family and now requisitioned for the housing of two or three families is accountable for many flagrant evils. These buildings are old and more or less run down; the old-fashioned windows are small and hard to open; toilet arrangements are inadequate. Originally planned for only one family, they are like made-over garments which fit the material rather than the person. Basements, cellars, and attics are used as apartments.

By contrast the modern tenements scattered throughout the district, although provided with their own quota of building-code violations, seem infinitely desirable, and there is no doubt that the seventy-two structures that have been erected since 1902 do very perceptibly raise the condition of the ten blocks as a whole. It is certain that they are a factor in making the percentage of houses reported in good repair as high as 64. They also account for the large number of brick buildings, which constitute 50 per cent of all dwellings.

It was to be expected that in this district few people would own their homes, and this is shown to be true by the accompanying table (IV), which indicates that 768 families, or 76 per cent of the total number, pay rent. And yet in comparison with other districts for which similar statistics are available, the proportion

of owners, 24 per cent, is large. In the Lower North Side Italian district, for example, but 8 per cent of the families, and in the Slavic sections but 18 per cent, were owners. Among those renting, 393, or more than half the number, have lived in their present quarters less than one year, while 32 per cent show a tenancy of less than six months. A considerable proportion of the population in these blocks is, therefore, either new or shifting. Thirty-six per cent of the owners, however, have been in their present homes ten years or more. These oldest residents, of course, are almost entirely the Germans, Irish, or Poles, already mentioned as the

TABLE IV

TENANTS AND OWNERS WITH LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN APARTMENT

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	TENANTS		OWNERS	
	Number	Cumulative Percentage	Number	Cumulative Percentage
Under one month . . . . .	21	3	1	.....
One month and less than three months . .	67	12	8	4
Three months and less than six months . .	157	32	10	8
Six months and less than one year . . . . .	148	51	10	12
One year and less than three years . . . . .	177	74	33	26
Three years and less than six years . . . . .	120	90	51	47
Six years and less than ten years . . . . .	52	97	41	64
Ten years and over . . . . .	26	3	87	36
Total reporting . . . . .	768*	100	241	100

\*In addition there were eighteen apartments that were vacant and four others whose ownership was not reported.

predecessors of the Lithuanians, who have stayed on until now, isolated amid a strange folk of strange language and custom, either because their holding of property demanded it, or because, as one old German woman who had been in the district fifty years said, they "wouldn't feel at home anywhere else."

Among the owners who have more recently acquired property the tenement landlord is largely represented. The tenement landlord lives in one apartment in the building he owns. Often he is still working to pay for his home and, as a consequence, occupies the cheapest and most undesirable rooms in the house in order to receive the largest possible income from tenants.



Such was the situation of the landlord who lived in three cellar rooms so low that a person more than 5 feet 8 inches tall could not stand upright in them. The kitchen, a fair-sized room with windows on the street, though its gray-painted wooden walls and ceiling served well to accentuate the absence of sunlight, was merely gloomy; but the other two rooms were both small and dark with tiny lot-line windows only 4 square feet in area. In one of these rooms, 564 cubic feet in contents, the father and one child slept; the other, which contained only 443 cubic feet, was the bedroom of the mother and two children. One of the highly colored holy pictures common among the Lithuanians and Poles, though it hung right by the window, was an indistinguishable blur. Such again was the home of the man who lived with his family in the attic of a new three-story brick tenement, and of the stockyards' employee who himself occupied a wretched little frame cottage, its dirty bedrooms filled with lodgers, on the rear of the lot back of a good modern brick tenement which he had just erected. Only too often, then, ownership is not synonymous with prosperity, but means rather the effort to secure property and future welfare at the cost of present ease and health.

Just what the renters in this district are paying for the accommodations they secure is brought out in Table V, which gives the number of apartments at specified monthly rentals together with the number of rooms in the apartments. In studying it one notes a great range in the amount of monthly rental, which varies from less than \$4 to more than \$30. The information here secured tallies with that of former investigations in showing that the four-room apartment is the most common type. A comparison of the median rentals for four-room apartments in the different neighborhoods canvassed in housing surveys in Chicago shows a rather high rate in the Lithuanian district. Only among the colored people were rents higher, and, with the exception of the Jewish quarter, they were actually lower. The possible explanation of the higher rate among the Lithuanians will be discussed a little later. That the presence of lodgers in great numbers, frequently given as a reason for high rents, does not satisfactorily account for it, is made clear by the absence of invariable coincidence between

high cost of rent and a large proportion of lodgers in the different districts canvassed. Nor is there reason to believe that there is racial discrimination such as that which makes the Negro and the Jew pay such high rent for such poor quarters.

TABLE V

NUMBER OF APARTMENTS FOR WHICH SPECIFIED MONTHLY RENTALS ARE PAID  
AND NUMBER OF ROOMS IN APARTMENT

RENT PER MONTH	NUMBER OF ROOMS							No REPORT	TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 or More		
Less than \$4.....	1	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3
\$ 4 and less than 5.....	1	8	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10
5 and less than 6.....	11	4	8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	23
6 and less than 7.....	3	16	15	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	35
7 and less than 8.....	3	14	23	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	41
8 and less than 9.....	.....	8	67	1	2	.....	.....	.....	78
9 and less than 10.....	.....	12	59	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	74
10 and less than 11.....	1	109	12	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	127
11 and less than 12.....	.....	56	12	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	69
12 and less than 13.....	.....	68	25	8	3	.....	.....	.....	104
13 and less than 14.....	.....	1	21	36	10	1	.....	.....	69
14 and less than 15.....	.....	9	13	7	1	.....	.....	.....	30
15 and less than 30.....	.....	3	9	15	27	3	1	.....	58
30 and over.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	5	.....	.....	8
Rent unknown.....	.....	2	4	2	.....	.....	.....	1	9
Rent free.....	1	.....	2	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	4
Rent for apartment includes rent for store.....	1	1	5	23	11	5	1	1	48
Number of apartments rented..	4	29	66	473	133	68	14	3	790
Number of apartments owned..	1	9	13	94	35	60	29	.....	241
Total.....	5	38	79	567	168	128	43	3	1,031

Before leaving Table V it remains to see whether there is any apparent relation between the rate of rent and the number of rooms obtained. Little connection is noticeable. For example, the cost of two-room apartments ranges from less than \$4 monthly to between \$10 and \$11. Four or even five rooms can be had for less than \$8. For \$12 one can obtain a four-, five-, six-, or even seven-room apartment. Something other than mere number of rooms must, therefore, be sought to explain variation in price, and this explanation probably lies in the position of the apartment in the front, middle, or rear of the floor and in the first, second, or

third story of the house; in the conveniences of the house itself; and in the character of the immediate neighbors and neighborhood.

In fact, judging by the position of the apartments, one would expect to find a somewhat higher rent rate in this district. As Table VI shows, there is a large number of through apartments,

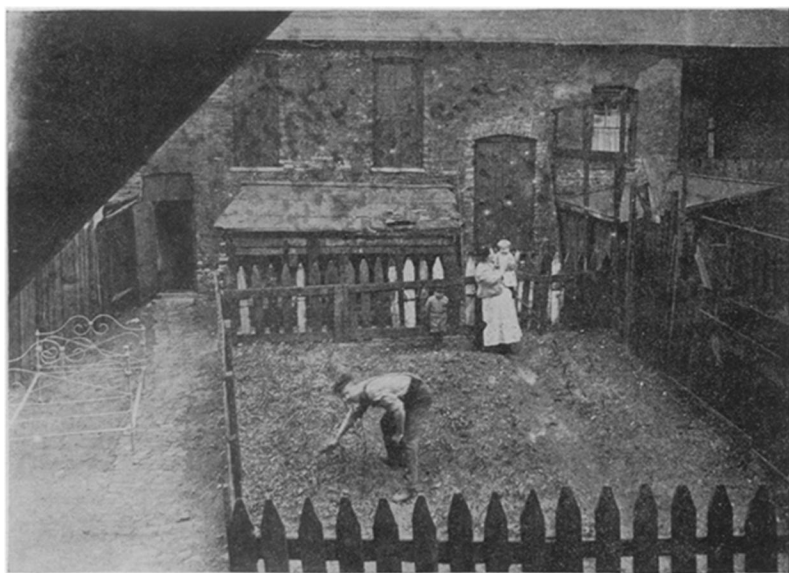
TABLE VI  
POSITION OF APARTMENTS

Position of Apartments	Number	Percentage
Front.....	243	24
Middle.....	30	3
Rear.....	292	28
Through.....	466	45
Total.....	1,031	100

for 466, or 45 per cent of the 1,031 apartments visited, cover an entire floor. This kind of apartment affords greater possibilities of gaining privacy, light, and air and is, as a result, eminently desirable. The table also shows that the number of rear apartments is somewhat in excess of the number of front ones, but this discrepancy is explained by the presence of living-rooms back of stores or saloons. Such dwelling-rooms are especially undesirable, for they are, as a rule, not completely separated from the store proper; often, too, the toilet in the store or saloon is the only one provided for the family. Again, the mother frequently serves as clerk and is liable on that account to neglect her housework. Moreover, some of these apartments are made by putting up a board partition, which does not extend all the way to the ceiling, to subdivide the space back of the store. Subdivision after this fashion results in windowless rooms. Such an apartment was the five-room one with two dark bedrooms lacking any openings to the outer air and a third with a small lot-line window opening directly upon the brick wall of the house next door. The front of the building was an undertaking establishment kept by the father; the mother and helpmate was a midwife; there were six children in the family. In one of the windowless bedrooms the man and his wife slept, with the youngest child swinging in a hammock



A WINDOWLESS ROOM IN AN APARTMENT BACK OF A STORE



A BACK YARD SHARED BY THREE FAMILIES

above them. In another such apartment containing four rooms, two windowless, six people were living. This apartment was not entirely cut off from the store, but the opening between the two was left without a door. To protect the family against intruders a dog was kept tied to the leg of a dresser, just to the right of the curtained entrance. Place for the toilet was secured by inclosing a corner of the kitchen. The mother was the sole clerk in the store during the father's absence at his regular work in the stock-yards, and the consequent disorder in the house was readily understandable.

Table VII shows the number of apartments in cellar, basement, attic, or other floor. Here again this district would probably yield

TABLE VII  
NUMBER OF APARTMENTS ABOVE AND BELOW STREET LEVEL

	Number	Percentage
Cellar.....	35	3
Basement.....	102	10
Attic.....	10	1
Other floor.....	884	86
Total.....	1,031	100

a higher median rental because of the large number of apartments located elsewhere than in cellar, basement, or attic. The small proportion of cellars is in part due to the fact that the street grade is not so far above the lot-level—87 per cent of the lots are less than four feet below the pavement—that, if the regulation fixing  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet<sup>1</sup> as the minimum height of rooms be observed, cellars are likely to result. Nevertheless the thirty-five apartments which do, by being more than one-half below street level, come under classification as cellars<sup>2</sup> present many evidences of unwholesome and insanitary conditions. The rooms are frequently only 6, 7, or 8 feet in height; some, in fact, less than 6. Moreover, the distance below the sidewalk causes even those that have windows opening on the street or the passage to be gloomy, and it is the

<sup>1</sup> Revised Building Ordinances, sec. 445.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 432.



**A CELLAR ROOM CONTAINING ONLY 450 CUBIC FEET OF AIR SPACE**  
Occupied by woman and two children



**A BASEMENT ROOM CONTAINING LESS THAN 700 CUBIC FEET OF  
AIR SPACE**

This whole family, with one child not in the picture, slept in the one room

exception rather than the rule to find such cellars other than damp. Now and again some rooms in an apartment will be so wet that the family must huddle in a single room, or live, cook, eat, and sleep in half the space they usually have until continued dry weather makes the abandoned quarters once more habitable. A German landlord's explanation for the presence of wet walls not only in the cellar but also in the first floor is naïve. When remonstrated with over existing unhealthful conditions in the old frame cottage that he owned and next door to which he himself was living in a good light, brick tenement, he asserted that it was all the fault of the Lithuanian tenant, who was too "saving" of fuel to build a fire that would dry out the house.

The attic apartments also have bad features. The pitch of the roof cuts off the height of the rooms, and makes them low and very hot in summer. In some of the older cottages attempts to construct apartments out of attics and thus increase income through rents has led to the utilization of all available space. It was in one attic of this sort that a windowless room was found, formed by partitions shutting it off from the kitchen at one end and the front bedroom at the other. Its mean height was 5 feet; its area 127 square feet; its cubic contents 641 cubic feet; two people were sleeping in it. One of the three attic rooms where a Lithuanian landlord was living showed even worse conditions. Here the mean height was  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet; the floor area 68 square feet; and the cubic contents only 380 cubic feet. In this dark, windowless room, separated from the kitchen by a thin, yellow board partition, against which a large cook stove stood, the landlord was sleeping. Both these cases show interesting violations of the present building code, which provides that in new tenements attic rooms must be  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet high in one-half their area and must contain not fewer than 750 cubic feet of air space;<sup>1</sup> and that in existing tenements an attic must be  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet high in one-half its area, have 750 cubic feet of air space, be provided with a window whose superficial area is at least one-twelfth the floor area, and be used for no purposes of human habitation other than as a sleeping-room.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Revised Building Ordinances, sec. 445.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 476.

Two reasons which probably explain the slightly higher rent paid by people in these ten blocks have been discussed, namely, the large number of through apartments and of apartments not in the cellar, basement, or attic. A third factor, the modern conveniences furnished, may further account for this. One hundred and thirty-four bathtubs were found in the 1,031 apartments, not a large number but one which makes this neighborhood compare favorably with other districts. One great advance is also to be detected in the ratio which the apartment toilet bears to other types. Four hundred and thirty-eight, or 42 per cent of the entire number of families, had private toilets. This is a considerably higher proportion than any other investigation has established.

But conditions are still far from desirable. More than one-fourth of the families are using yard closets, and, while these may be less objectionable than those under the sidewalk so common in the Slovak district, they are thoroughly bad from a sanitary and moral standpoint. They are, as a matter of course, unlighted at night; most of them are of the old long-hopper style, hard to flush, hard to keep clean, and frequently in bad repair. Many of them are never kept locked and consequently are used more or less promiscuously. One toilet that was found in a bad state of repair was said to be flushed once a week; another was packed in manure to keep it from freezing. Near a saloon there was one group of four toilets that were used by nine families; all these toilets were dirty; two, which could not be flushed at all, were indescribably filthy. Of the 161 yard closets found, 47 per cent were dirty and 37 per cent not in good repair.

Basement and cellar closets are, of course, less likely to freeze in winter, but they are almost sure to be poorly ventilated and so poorly lighted that it is little wonder that half of those visited were found to be dirty. Furthermore, in so damp an atmosphere the hopper closets get rusty and the wooden parts never dry out. Of the 106 cellar and basement closets, 31 per cent were out of repair. In one case, the only way to the closet was through a cellar where chickens were kept. In another place where two cellar closets were side by side the only light in the second came from an eighteen-inch square hole cut into the first.



On account of their position within the house it is even more important that hall closets be kept in good condition. As a matter of fact, they were worse than either the yard or basement closets; only 49 per cent were clean and only 56 per cent in good repair. Ventilation was inadequate in many cases, and the odor in the hall was most objectionable. In one place in which the people were said to be disorderly and drunken there were two hall toilets for three families, or twenty-one persons. The partition separating the closets from the hall was only 6 feet high, and opening directly above was the single window to a bedroom. In several cases the only toilet accommodation for families in which there were young children was a closet opening off a saloon and used by its patrons.

Table VIII, showing the number of instances of one toilet for a specified number of persons, is significant. There are 103

TABLE VIII  
LOCATION OF TOILETS AND NUMBER OF PERSONS USING THEM

Location of Toilet	5 Persons or Less	6-10 Persons	11-15 Persons	16-20 Persons	Total Number of Toilets
Yard.....	27	76	49	9	161
Under sidewalk.....	0	4	0	0	4
Basement or cellar.....	29	54	21	2	106
Hall.....	8	37	33	2	80
Total.....	64	171	103	13	351

instances where one toilet was being used by from 11-15 persons, and 13 cases where 16-20 persons were using one closet. Although 42 per cent of the families had toilets within the apartment, there were 362 families sharing a toilet with one other family, and 69 families sharing a toilet with two other families. When one considers that this means men, women, and children, and not only members of the family but lodgers and neighbors as well, one realizes the utter impossibility of maintaining under such conditions any but the lowest standards of privacy and decency. The apartment toilet, already provided for in new-law tenements for apartments of over two rooms, is the only satisfactory solution of the problem.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Revised Building Ordinances, sec. 470 (a).

Table IX illustrates still another phase of the housing problem, one which depends not so much on the construction of rooms as upon their number in relation to the size of the family that occupies them. Such patent examples of overcrowding are at once evident as two cases of three people living in one-room apartments, or one case where four people live in one room. Taking next the prevalent type of apartment, the four-room suite, we find that in each of 273 out of a total of 567 such apartments six or more people were living. This means either overcrowding in rooms used for sleeping purposes or the appropriation of all rooms in the house as bedrooms,

TABLE IX

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN HOUSEHOLD AND NUMBER OF ROOMS IN APARTMENT

NUMBER OF ROOMS	NUMBER OF PERSONS										VACANT OR No REPORT	TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more		
1.....	1	1	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
2.....	7	9	9	7	4	1	...	...	...	...	1	38
3.....	3	7	15	20	16	5	5	4	1	...	3	70
4.....	1	30	59	80	116	111	78	55	19	10	8	567
5.....	1	4	10	15	18	29	31	28	13	16	3	168
6.....	...	4	25	16	13	19	12	21	9	9	...	128
7 or more.....	1	2	4	2	5	8	5	7	4	4	1	43
No report.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Total.....	14	57	124	141	172	173	131	115	46	39*	19	1,031

\* There was one instance of twelve people living in five rooms, and one instance of thirteen people in four rooms.

whatever be their use during the day. In either case there is lack of privacy, which, especially when one remembers the large number of lodgers in this district, is of serious moral import. If a family's standard of living requires the maintenance of a kitchen or parlor, there is the insanitary cramping of bedroom space. Furthermore, when there are eight or more people occupying a four-room apartment, as there were in 84 cases, though all the rooms are used for sleeping purposes, serious overcrowding is unavoidable. Nor is the reader who attempts to visualize life in one of these "homes" permitted by the facts to construct large, airy rooms. In similar investigations previously made in Chicago the total floor area of

apartments was carefully computed and found to be for the majority between 400 and 550 square feet, without doubt a representative size in this neighborhood as well. The most frequently recurrent bedroom, as Table X shows, was that containing between 600 and 800 cubic feet. One must have seen such apartments to be able fully to appreciate the sordid ugliness of life in them. Homes were only too often reduced through their very lack of space to the standard of affording nothing but places to eat and sleep.

Table X, which gives the number of adults and children sleeping in one room of specified cubic contents, presents more clearly the overcrowding in bedrooms. The building code requires 400 cubic feet of air space for every adult in a sleeping-room, and half that amount for a child under twelve.<sup>1</sup> In the table two children under twelve are taken as equal to one adult. All cases above the leaded line are, consequently, instances of illegal overcrowding. Twelve hundred and eighty-eight, or 53 per cent of the entire number of bedrooms, were unlawfully overcrowded. That this is an underestimate is probable because there was frequent disinclination to tell the number of lodgers in a family. No generalization deduced from a table can, however, convey just what overcrowding means so well as setting forth a few individual cases. Examples like the following speak for themselves: In a small, gloomy room, containing but 536 cubic feet of air, a Polish butcher's family, consisting of three adults and four children, slept. The room had but one lot-line window and this was never opened. Again, in a Lithuanian laborer's family two adults and five children slept in a room having only 693 cubic feet of air space instead of the required 1,800. Even worse was the case of two grown people and five children sleeping in a room which contained just 23 cubic feet more air space than the law requires for one adult. This same room had but 65 square feet floor area, was only  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, and had a total window area of but  $4\frac{1}{2}$  square feet. Again, in the family of a Polish laborer five adults were sleeping in a room with 763 cubic feet of air space instead of the required 2,000. The crowded condition of the room with 57 square feet floor area

<sup>1</sup> Revised Building Ordinances, sec. 447.

TABLE X  
NUMBER OF PERSONS SLEEPING IN ROOMS OF SPECIFIED CUBIC CONTENTS

Contents of Room in Cubic Feet	One Child	One Adult	One Adult and One Child	Two Adults	Two Adults and One Child	Three Adults	Three Adults and One Child	Four Adults	Four Adults and One Child	Five Adults or More	Total
Less than 400.....	2	27	4	25	3	30	3	5	2	1	61
400 and less than 600.....	3	214	51	247	56	111	29	46	3	2	612
600 and less than 800.....	5	167	53	319	106	75	22	25	2	2	841
800 and less than 1,000.....	5	65	28	134	42	22	5	3	1	.....	400
1,000 and less than 1,200.....	3	39	10	44	22	11	2	8	1	1	149
1,200 and less than 1,400.....	4	57	7	38	5	6	.....	5	1	1	134
1,400 and less than 1,600.....	5	56	8	37	8	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	127
1,600 and less than 1,800.....	8	23	5	23	1	5	.....	.....	.....	.....	65
1,800 and less than 2,000.....	2	16	1	9	6	1	2	1	.....	.....	37
2,000 and more.....	.....	10	1	6	1	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	22
Total.....	37	674	168	882	250	264	63	93	10	7	2,448*

Number of illegal cases  
is 1,288, or 53 per cent

\* The number of occupants or the size of thirty-five rooms was not reported.

and 500 cubic feet contents in which mother, father, and two children slept can easily be imagined.

One could go on multiplying such instances for they occur with an alarming frequency, which is, however, perfectly understandable when one recalls that the typical bedroom already referred to had from 600 to 800 cubic feet contents. In this district there are 673 bedrooms whose contents are less than 600 cubic feet, 61 of them with contents less than 400 cubic feet, the minimum for one adult. Moreover, 1,120 rooms, or 45 per cent, are less than 80 square feet in area, and 384, or 16 per cent, less than  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet in height, the standard set for new buildings.<sup>1</sup> Though the majority of these cases occur in old buildings, 61 violations of floor area are found in the 28 "new-law" houses. Sometimes, of course, it is not the fault of the building at all, but a family's compelling need to occupy every available nook and cranny of a house, which leads, for example, to the turning of what was originally intended for a clothes closet into the windowless bedroom of a girl lodger, or to the appropriation of a pantry as a sleeping-place.

There is yet another thing that complicates living conditions and is the ostensible reason for overcrowding in 519, or one-half the families, the while it serves in a measure to solve the difficulty of the rent problem. This is the presence of 1,555 lodgers. To illustrate, in the home of the family having the girl lodger, occupying the clothes closet just referred to, was a large, light front room not used as a bedroom, which might have been converted to such purposes, had it not been that opening from it was the bedroom of a man lodger. Here the attempt to avert moral danger led to the choice of a sanitary evil. Not always was such a solution possible; often not only the privacy of a lodger but also that of the members of a family had to be sacrificed. As a result, in 124 cases, lodgers were found sleeping with members of the family. That there is in any event likelihood both of moral harm and of overcrowding in the majority of bedrooms is perhaps better conceivable from the statement of the fact that only 2,744 people out of a total population of 5,624 were sleeping less than three to a room; that in 269 cases four were using the same bedroom; and that in twenty

<sup>1</sup> Revised Building Ordinances, sec. 445.

cases as high as six and in nine cases as many as seven people were sharing one room.

As important as the cubic contents in considering bedrooms are the size and the outlook of the windows, for upon these two things depend light and ventilation. With reference to size, the building law<sup>1</sup> requires that in every new tenement house, every habitable room shall have a window or windows with a total glass area equal to at least one-tenth of the floor area, and that none of such required windows shall have a glass area of less than 10 square feet. Among the bedrooms of the ten blocks studied 524 had less than 10 square feet of window area, and 235 of these were gloomy or dark. Of rooms whose window area was less than one-tenth the floor area 269 were discovered, 105 of which were poorly lighted. The smaller number of violations of the ratio between floor and window area is to be expected since the rooms are often so small that though the window area meets the required ratio it may still fall well below 10 square feet.

Even taking no cognizance of the fact that these violations overlap one another and permit the same poorly lighted room to be listed twice, there are still 266 dark or gloomy bedrooms not accounted for, where the reason for the lack of light must be sought in the outlook of the windows. Regarding outlook the ordinances provide that the minimum of window space described above must open upon street, alley, yard, or court<sup>2</sup> and that 3 feet is the minimum width for an outer court belonging to a new tenement.<sup>3</sup> Table XI shows several rooms with windows opening into airshafts, other rooms, or halls, but the majority, 62 per cent, open on lot-lines or passages. A lot-line window was for this investigation one opening within a foot of the lot-line; a passage was the long, narrow, uncovered space left at one side of a tenement as the means of approach to the rear apartments. Such passages varied from 3 to 5 feet in width. The custom in building is to make the lot-line wall of one house abut upon the passage of the adjoining tenement. Owing to this, lot-line windows of one house afford as much light and air as the passage windows of the one opposite.

<sup>1</sup> Revised Building Ordinances, sec. 448(a).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 475.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 442(c).

Not infrequently it happens, however, that a building will cover the full width of a lot. Particularly is this likely to be true along business streets. Here the effect is to deprive all rooms with lot-line openings of both light and air.

In any event such windows are not in accord with the regulation of the code, and the fact that 58 per cent of gloomy and dark rooms have lot-line windows speaks strongly in favor of the rigid enforcement of the law. There should not be, as there are, 26 people sleeping in windowless rooms, 124 in rooms with interior windows only, 336 in rooms with the window area less than 10 per

TABLE XI  
OUTLOOK OF LIGHT, GLOOMY, AND DARK BEDROOMS

OUTLOOK	LIGHT	GLOOMY	DARK	TOTAL	
				Number	Percentage
No window. . . . .	1	2	10	13	1
Airshaft. . . . .	6	9	4	19	1
Room or hall. . . . .	2	35	15	52	2
Porch. . . . .	46	13	1	60	2
Lot-line. . . . .	579	297	58	934	37
Passage. . . . .	499	106	14	619	25
Court. . . . .	53	16	.....	69	3
Yard. . . . .	280	11	3	294	12
Alley. . . . .	64	5	.....	69	3
Street. . . . .	340	6	.....	346	14
Skylight. . . . .	2	1	.....	3	.....
Total. . . . .	1,872	501	105	2,478*	100
Percentage. . . . .	76	20	4	100	.....

\* In the case of five rooms, classified as light, the outlook was not reported.

cent of the floor area, 1,180 in dark or gloomy rooms, and 225 in rooms undesirable both because their windows are too small and because their outlook is such that it shuts off light and air. There should be no one house that could continue to furnish, as one twelve-room tenement in this district is doing, five dirty, dark bedrooms, so small that only one exceeds 479 cubic feet in contents and so poorly equipped for ventilation that in none is the window area greater than 3 square feet, and in none do even these tiny windows open upon the outer air, but instead in four rooms overlook a hall and in the fifth, a saloon.

The foregoing pages have tried to give a picture of a representative foreign neighborhood in Chicago after a dozen years of attempted tenement-house reform. A comparison of this district with those described in earlier housing studies is not completely discouraging; nevertheless there is much to show the need of further vigilance and care. Without exception the worst conditions have been found in old houses, but while this is prophetic of good things



**TWO ADULTS AND THIS CHILD SLEPT HERE**

Room contains less than 675 cubic feet of air space. The only window opens on a hall.

for the distant future, it must not cause forgetfulness of the needs of the immediate present. The supplanting of old houses by modern ones will be a painfully slow process, for the abandonment of an old house does not come quickly. Meanwhile the code as it now stands does not prohibit in old buildings the things that it will not tolerate in new. And not even the lower standard for these old buildings is actually attained. This investigation has shown 1,288 cases of illegal overcrowding in bedrooms;



has revealed windowless rooms and rooms whose window area in 137 cases was less than 8 per cent of the floor area, whereas even for old houses the legal minimum ratio is one-twelfth; has discovered 673 bedrooms with less than 600 cubic feet of air space; has found 384 rooms under  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, some in cellars with the ceiling as low as 5 feet 8 inches; and 1,120 rooms less than 80 square feet in floor area, 61 of them in "new-law" houses. Even in this district, which ranks favorably with many others in its toilet provisions, more than one-half of the families are still dependent upon other than private apartment toilets. All these facts point not so much to inadequate legislation as to that common fault of American life and habit which, while it encourages the making of good laws, fails to provide for their subsequent careful execution, and results in this case in giving us good tenements on paper but poor ones in brick and mortar.